

**U. S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY**

**FEMA**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**FEMA AUTHORIZES FUNDS TO HELP FIGHT MONTANA WILDFIRE**

DENVER -- The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) today authorized the use of federal funds to help Montana fight the Missouri Breaks Complex fire burning about 35 miles northwest of Jordan, Mont.

Michael D. Brown, FEMA Director and Under Secretary for Emergency Preparedness and Response at the Department of Homeland Security, approved the state's request for federal fire management assistance immediately after confirming that the fire was threatening 82 homes, farms and ranches. The fire, which started July 16, 2003, had consumed more than 117,570 acres and forced the evacuation of 50 people at the time of the request.

The authorization makes FEMA funding available to pay 75 percent of the state's eligible firefighting costs under an approved grant for managing, mitigating and controlling designated fires.

Federal fire management assistance is provided through the President's Disaster Relief Fund and made available by FEMA to assist in fighting fires that threaten to cause a major disaster. Eligible state firefighting costs covered by the aid can include expenses for field camps; equipment use, repair and replacement; tools, materials and supplies; and mobilization and demobilization activities.

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*On March 1, 2003, FEMA became part of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. FEMA's continuing mission within the new department is to lead the effort to prepare the nation for all hazards and effectively manage federal response and recovery efforts following any national incident. FEMA also initiates proactive mitigation activities, trains first responders, and manages Citizens Corps, the National Flood Insurance Program and the U.S. Fire Administration.*